



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ALLEGED DRUG KINGPIN WANTED BY ICE, PENNSYLVANIA EXTRADITED FROM U.K. TO PHILADELPHIA TO STAND TRIAL ON MURDER, MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES

Fugitive accused of leading marijuana distribution ring suspected in murder of his wife

PHILADELPHIA-- An accused West Philadelphia marijuana trafficker who fled the United States in 1995 following the murder of his wife and another witness has been extradited from England to the United States to stand trial on federal charges that include continuing criminal enterprise, money laundering, and state charges that include murder.

The extradition and arraignment was announced today by Patrick Meehan, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent-in-Charge William Reid, and District Attorney of Philadelphia Lynne M. Abraham.

"The criminal activity of this man and his associates divided this city and caused great long-term harm to its citizens and institutions," said Reid. "ICE remained intent on locating him and we looked forward to the day when he would be held accountable for his actions. Today is that day."

Corbin Thomas faces federal charges that include:

- "Engaging in a Continuing Criminal Enterprise"- 1 count;
- "Conspiracy to Distribute Marijuana"- 1 count;
- "Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering"- 7 counts;
- "Distribution of Marijuana"- 9 counts;
- "Money Laundering"- 9 counts;
- "Obstruction of Justice"- 1 count;
- "Perjury before the Grand Jury"- 1 count;
- "Aiding and Abetting" and
- "Criminal forfeiture."

State charges include murder, conspiracy, and kidnapping.

ICE special agents in Philadelphia launched their investigation into Thomas in November 1993 after receiving information about a suspicious currency transaction involving the exportation of vehicles

to Jamaica. After several years of investigation, ICE agents developed information indicating that Thomas presided over a violent drug trafficking and money laundering organization in the metropolitan Philadelphia area.

In September 1998, ICE special agents executed arrest warrants on 24 individuals associated with this organization. ICE agents arrested Philadelphia police officer Peter Henry --a close friend of Corbin Thomas who laundered money for Thomas through his personal credit union account-- and several other defendants. However, four of the defendants, including Thomas, escaped arrest and became wanted fugitives.

Through cooperation with ICE agents, Jamaican authorities attempted to locate Thomas and another fugitive believed to be residing in Jamaica. Jamaican authorities later learned that Thomas and a co-conspirator had fled to London in the United Kingdom.

As a result of the ICE investigation up to that point, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police Department, were later able to bring murder charges in December 2002 against Thomas for the killing of Hope Thomas, his wife. Hope Thomas was shot to death by a masked man Nov. 15, 1995.

In 2002, ICE agents received information indicating that Thomas and a co-conspirator were hiding at a specific address in London. The ICE Attaché in London passed this information to New Scotland Yard, which arrested Thomas and his accomplice shortly thereafter. Thomas vigorously contested his extradition.

Nevertheless, Thomas was successfully extradited to Philadelphia Wednesday. Thomas was arraigned Thursday in federal court in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on the fugitive warrant and remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

This criminal charges against Thomas are being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office and the District Attorney of Philadelphia's Office.

If convicted on the federal charges alone, Thomas faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a 20 year mandatory sentence, a \$17.75 million fine, a mandatory minimum five years supervised release, possible lifetime supervised release, and forfeiture.

Also investigating Thomas' activities with ICE were the IRS, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Philadelphia Police Department.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.